

TRIPPI

**INPUT**

**ITERATION 1**

**MARCH 2009**

**COMMON SPACES:  
PUBLIC PLACES**

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## **OPENING**

**INPUT is** an aesthetic journal published by an international ensemble of editors directed under a curatorial mandate on contemporary currents and cultural conditions. It offers independent expression within the multitude of art books, academic journals and über luxe magazines bound to conventional marketplace demands.

**INPUT is** neither a magazine nor a book. Each “Iteration” will serve as a collective statement from the editorial ensemble produced under the guidance and viewpoint of rotating directors, but subject to the editorial collective’s critical review. As **INPUT** recognizes that few writing collectives authentically work outside their individual authorship(s), the label of “ensemble” is applied to approximate both collective and individual productions. Like many other “selective” or “curatorial” approaches, the

journal relies on the purview of the editorial director of each Iteration. Unlike most journals, however, **INPUT**'s vision of a fluid hierarchy intends to provide variation within existing visual structures, means of production and critical methodologies.

**INPUT** currently does not accept open contributions. The editorial ensemble solicits images, critical examinations, poems, reviews and creative discourses that are produced specifically for the journal. **INPUT** seeks to collapse divisions between these genres, and thus offers variety and deliberate inconsistency as a more representative expression of our current creative and intellectual matrix.

Founder, Renée N. Vara

# **INPUT**

**ITERATION 1**

**MARCH 2009**

## **ENSEMBLE:**

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Diana Bramham, editor

Antoine Thélamon, contributing editor

Elena Bajo, contributor

Orit Ben-Shitrit, contributor

Olek, contributor

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Avelino Sala, contributor

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## **CONTENTS**

**(1) OLEK :**

Fairy Tales Are Not Real

**(4) ANTOINE THÉLAMON :**

The Aesthetics of Voyeurism

**(15) RENÉE VARA :**

Dilettantes and Plagiarists

**(25) AVELINO SALA :**

A Learning of Loneliness

**(31) MEHMET ÖNGÜT :**

Kent Karlsson

**(41) ORIT BEN-SHITRIT :**

FRS

**(50) ELENA BAJO :**

Notes on Public Situations,  
Philosophical Models

**OLEK**





Olek

“Fairy Tales Are Not Real”

Black and White Digital Print, 2009

Created during the residency at

Instituto Sacatar, Brazil

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Olek (born Agata Oleksiak) rediscovered her talent for crocheting after moving from her native Poland to New York. Resume sniffers will be pleased to know that Olek's work has been presented in galleries and biennales throughout New York Turkey Italy, Brazil and Poland. The *New York Times*, *Fiberarts Magazine*, *Village Voice*, and *Washington Post* have also featured her work. Her numerous awards include the Ruth Mellon Award for Sculpture, the Apex Art Gallery Award and residencies at Sculpture Space and the Instituto Sacatar in Brazil. Olek can often be found dragging a trail of dance performance sets and costumes to locations too numerous to mention.

**ANTOINE THÉLAMON**

## **The Aesthetics of Voyeurism: The Moral Effects of Context**

Societal control and surveillance have always been critical themes in art and popular culture. The eye, for example, a symbol of such ideas, has undergone tremendous iconographic transformations and interpretations from a theological representation of the “All-Seeing-Eye” to heterogeneous appropriations by mass media that create derivatives of the film *noir* tradition in series such as the *Twilight Zone* (1964) and *The Prisoner* (1967).<sup>1</sup> In *The Prisoner*, the All-Seeing Eye is depicted as an icon of malevolent control in the Village council chamber. In the Village, everything happens as if the eye functions as the

theoretical locus of a whole drama. The formal characteristics of the series orchestrate a paranoid fictional artifact. The space-frame of the plot (supposedly an island), the oppressive surveillance of close-circuit television cameras located throughout the Village, and observers, who continually spy on villagers and foil Number 6's attempts to escape, create a class language of what we assume to be a life-or-death and self-interrogation situation for Number 6 in his quest for freedom. The Village becomes a closed system and the eye the core narrative structure of the irreversible repressive nature of a society of interchangeable and anonymous inmates.

Although this series is a fictionalizing enterprise, it finds a thematic variation in today's reality where the possibilities of computer surveillance seem to be technically unlimited. Everyday life is continuously fast forwarded and digitized with parasitic and invasive technologies. Communications are intercepted, information is streamlined and

stored and the cult of celebrity is commoditized and erected as a collective value through popular entertainment like reality TV shows. As the Web 2.0 phenomenon expanded, self-exposure through video-sharing websites and social networks exploded, generating “real” images and films from millions of extroverted strangers who broadcast the minutiae of their lives.

When the net.art movement duo Eva and Franco Mattes conceived a “self-surveillance system for complete digital transparency”<sup>2</sup> they undeniably pushed the panopticon scheme rationale into the territory of pervasive absurdity. Their works *Vopos* and *Life-sharing* (anagram of file-sharing) are parts of *Glasnost* a project they initiated in 2000 that consists of “monitoring and making public, in real time, the biggest quantity of data concerning an individual in actual society.”<sup>3</sup> In *Vopos* and *Life-sharing*, data was uploaded from a GPS transmitter worn by the artists so that anyone could precisely map their

whereabouts. Moreover, internet users had access to the Mattes' computer including their private emails. In another project, the Matteses gave their audience real-time access to all of their phone conversations for one month. Such interactive performances abruptly conflate the distinction between private and public spheres into one straight line. While the Mattes' works are simple in their construction, they unleash powerful effects as they make us contemplate the guilt and morality of monitoring someone else's life. The viewer intervenes decisively in the Mattes' moral trap but might not consider his viewing in moral terms beforehand, if ever.

The Mattes' tech-based interactivity in *Vopos* and *Life Sharing* is utterly based on a remote interaction that abstracts the viewer from the morally problematic act of viewing. The formal characteristics of this contact abolish all sense of guilt *hic et nunc*. It is as if the distance between the observer and the subject (the "docile body",<sup>4</sup> to speak like Foucault, in this

particular context) could suspend the potentially sinful act and redefine the core nature of what is at stake in the interactivity.

Yet, looking is implicating, as clicking bears in it the performative effects of the intention behind it. The viewer's distant location, however, almost intrinsically, makes this type of act morally acceptable. Both the viewer (in the double role of voyeur and witness) and the subject under scrutiny are dupes and accomplices in this tacit relation. In this ambiguous play between public and private spheres, the voyeur is indulged and physically freed of the constraints of his moral crime while the viewer is not viewed in return. This mismatch indisputably raises issues about the capacity of such simulacra not to be self-entrapped by the situation it originally intended to critique. If we accept that the viewer is determinant in the efficiency of the Mattes' voyeuristic scenario, the spatial disjunction the work imposes radically modifies the viewer's self-conscious perception



of what is morally acceptable. This dissociation flaws the attempt to denounce the immorality of the sinful act by precisely limiting the viewer's physical entry into the sordid voyeuristic scene. His identity is protected and nullified through the absence of any direct social control.

The most powerful critiques against surveillance systems seem to reside in what I call the moral effects of context. This notion refers to the capacity of a place (public or private) to function as a moral trap for the viewer because the context prefigures not only viewer participation (obviously guilty) but also his moral acceptance (or repulsion) of such complicity. Everything happens as if the viewer was engaged in a social dilemma and was abruptly hastened to clarify his moral position in the presence of others, themselves entrapped in the same moral prison as witnesses and ambiguous accomplices. The others, as mechanisms of moral reference and social pressure, hang more heavily on the

viewer the sense of guilt as they intensify the dilemma by their physical presence.<sup>5</sup>

In Julia Scher's installation *The Surveillance Bed III* (mixed-media, 2000), there is no physical body to watch, only the crumpled bed sheets reveal the viewer as voyeur. This breach in the rhetoric representation<sup>6</sup> of the body accelerates the viewer's psychological disturbance, which is, in return, exaggerated by another artifact, the threateningly engaging presence of close circuit-television cameras. The presence of this "collective" potentially amplifies the discomfort the viewer may experience in a context that literally requires his physical participation. The viewer is entangled in an ethical dilemma and is asked to take a position. Will he stop and watch or, will he walk away conflicted by what he considers as a sinful behavior?

Scher's *The Surveillance Bed III* obliquely intersects with Jonas Dahlberg's *Safe Zone N°9* (2004, mixed media) through its formal characteristics. Here again the viewer of *Safe*

*Zone N°9* confronts confused curiosity as he is privy to a video monitor broadcasting the private and intimate space of public lavatories. As the viewer can hardly determine whether the monitor he is watching is an illusion or reality, this subterfuge seals his moral and guilty complicity to the temporal dilation on what he suspects might happen. The question of the viewer's morality intensifies as he remains by his "crime scene", staring continuously at the monitors. If the absence of movement diverts the viewer from the scene, the time he spent waiting for something to happen still serves as a guilty sentence through the complex play of anticipation whether he witnesses the climax or not, whether something happens or not. Since he was free to walk away, his continuous presence brands him as a voyeur. Time and context split the viewer's self into a guilty voyeur.

Truth and falsity. The question of surveillance and control closely intersects with the narrative structure of duplicity. The ambiguity

of what is moral and what is not. The fluid boundary between the viewer as voyeur or witness of others' intentions makes visible the moral fracture of the self. The hypnotizing experience of suspended time coupled with the abstraction of distance sequentially exaggerates the moral dilemma in the viewer's mind. The three-fold relationship of viewer, viewed and artist (through his/her work) unleashes its most powerful moral effects when the physical context of fateful interaction makes you already guilty.



Antoine Thélamon is a Paris-based independent curator and scholar. During his doctoral studies in political science, he taught advanced seminars in sociology as a lecturer at Paris X-Nanterre University. His current research focuses on the theory and practice of exhibitions in contemporary museums. His interests also include popular culture, new media and aesthetic strategies and innovation in periods of social turmoil.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The All-Seeing-Eye represents an omniscient and omnipresent God. From Egyptian mythology to the U.S. one dollar bill, the All-Seeing-Eye has taken on a myriad of forms but is perhaps best recognized in the form of radiating light from the crown of a pyramid.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/vopos/concept.html>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, [trans. from the French], (New York: Vintage Book, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> From a pure theoretical point of view, the absence of the “subject” raises the issue of the performative effects of figuration over abstraction in such aesthetic practices and the weight such strategies carry in the critique of surveillance behaviors in modern society.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950); Erving Goffman *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor, 1959).

**RENÉE VARA**

## **Dilettantes and Plagiarists<sup>1</sup>**

All dilettantes are plagiarizers. They sap the life out of and destroy all that is original and beautiful in language and in thought by repeating it, imitating it, and filling up their own void with it. Thus, more and more language becomes filled with pillaged phrases and forms that no longer say anything; one can read entire books that have a beautiful style and contain nothing at all.<sup>2</sup>

I'm confused about who the news belongs to. I always have it in my head that if your name is in the news, then the news should be paying you. Because it's *your news* and they are

taking it and selling it as their product. But then they always say that they are helping you, and that's true too, but still, if people didn't give the news their news, and if everybody kept their news to themselves, the news wouldn't have any news. So I guess you should pay each other. But I haven't figured it out fully yet.<sup>3</sup>

From this initial video message to his preinauguration press conferences to more recent YouTube clips and weekly talks, Obama has transformed the function of the president elect, just as he transfigured the presidential campaign into an Internet phenomenon. Streaming from the Office of the President-Elect, a nonplace or any place, Obama proclaims his virtual presidency. The easy acceptance by the public and the media of this novel authority-after some initial "Where's the president?" "Nowhere" - attests to the way people live today, in online encounters and communities.<sup>4</sup>



C. Only to the extent that the bourgeoisie adopts concepts of value held by the aristocracy does bourgeois art have a representational function. When it is genuinely bourgeois, this art is the objectification of the self-understanding as articulated in art are no longer tied to the praxis of life. Habermas calls this the satisfaction of residual needs, that is, of needs that have become submerged in the life praxis of bourgeois society.<sup>5</sup>

I put on rouge and wash my hands in front of the whole world.<sup>6</sup>

The Soul has moments of Escape -  
When bursting all the doors -  
She dances like a bomb, abroad,  
And swings upon the Hours,

As do the Bee - delirious borne -  
Long Dungeoned from his Rose -  
Touch Liberty - then know no more,  
But Noon, and Paradise -<sup>7</sup>

Living things that we classify as gifts really grow, of course, but even inert gifts...are felt to increase—in worth or in liveliness—as they move from hand to hand. The distinction—alive/inert—is not always useful, in fact, because even when a gift is not alive it is treated as if it were, and whatever we treat as living begins to take on life.

Moreover, gifts that have taken on life can bestow it in return...Even if miracles are rare, it is still true that lifelessness leaves the soul when a gift comes toward us, for the gift property serves an upward force, the goodwill or *virtù* of nature, the soul, and the collective. (This is one of the senses in which I mean to say that a work of art is a gift. The gifted artist contains the vitality of his gift within the work, and thereby makes it available to others...).<sup>8</sup>

The book was the first mass-produced object. It was the first repeatable and uniform product. The process by which this kind of product was to achieve was a process soon extended to

many other forms of making. The process consists in the extreme fragmentation of the ancient craft of the scribe. Printing from moveable type is not only an analytic procedure of fragmentation, but it fathered similar fragmentation in many areas of human perception and human action.

It is precisely on this process of analytic fragmentation that all the fabrics of modern production, marketing, and pricing were built. It is a process that dissolves with the advent of electric circuitry. The dissolution of this process can be illustrated from the effects of xerography on book publication. Xerography makes the reader both author and publisher in tendency. The highly centralized activity of publishing naturally breaks down into extreme decentralism when anybody can, by means of xerography, assembled printed, or written, or photographic materials which can be supplied with sound tracks.<sup>9</sup>

The main facts about the Chanel show are these: the collection was inspired by writing paper – Mr. Lagerfeld is a complete antique in that he doesn't use a word processor – and all the clothes were white or black and white. What made the show a rare pleasure was Mr. Lagerfeld's supreme ability to concentrate on a single idea and find endless ways to express it...And ever so often Mr. Lagerfeld would halt his stream of thoughts across the page with a punctuation mark – say a short dress embroidered all over in black sequins with a draped panel at the back.<sup>10</sup>

AND LIKE GREAT ART, words wielded well have the power to alter the way we see the world. That's why in these rapidly changing times, the role of the calm-voiced and clear eyed reporter is more vital than ever. I didn't go to journalism school...Throughout this sometimes exhilarating, sometimes debilitating roller-coaster ride, we've kept our head and our journalistic integrity. Although I have lamented the sniping that has

characterized much of my colleagues' reporting during boom years – which I'm certain has been informed by no small dose of *schadenfreude* – I must point out that we are by no means the industry's in-house cheerleaders, nor are we Pollyannas purveying feel-good tales and happy endings to an audience that craves them. Nevertheless, I feel our cover is justified in trumpeting the “bright-side” identified by our estimable international editor, Souren Melikian, in his column beginning on page 45.<sup>11</sup>

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Renée Vara is an independent and private curator whose interests focus on social spaces, relational aesthetics and performative practices outside the context of institutional and corporate structures. She retains a Master's degree in art history from Hunter College/CUNY and has served as an Adjunct Professor at New York University for over 10 years. Renée has also been a guest lecturer at the Guggenheim Museum (NY), Sotheby's

Institute, American Association of Museums and the Appraisers Association of America. As a curator, Renée has organized exhibitions at the 9th Istanbul Biennale, Scope, Hunter College Gallery, and ArtHaus Miami(07). Her voice has been heard in both printed and live media such as *Forbes*, *Wall Street Journal*, *ArtNews*, *Flash Art*, *Turkish CNN*, *US News & World Report* and *Whitewall*.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The following sentences are not my own. They are someone else's words and are reprinted exactly as found in the "original". The authors quoted here may or may not be quoting someone else's text properly. Quotation marks are omitted throughout with this author's implicit goal of reading the texts unburdened, but knowingly, that all are quoted directly. This author takes no responsibility for this text or for the references of sources from the authors cited herein.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Werke*. (Weimarer: Ausgabe. Nachtrage 1768-1832), vol. 47, 313. Rpt. in Jochen Schulte-Sasse, "Theory of Modernism, versus Theory of the Avant-Garde: Foreword," in: Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (*Theory and History of Literature*) vol. 4 trans. Michael Shaw, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 2004) ix.

<sup>3</sup> Andy Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*, (New York: First Harvest, 1975), 78.

<sup>4</sup> Lynn Tillman, "The Virtual President," *Artforum* (January, 2009): 69.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Bürger, "Autonomy of Art in Bourgeois Society," *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 47-48.

<sup>6</sup> Marie Antoinette, July 12, 1770. As quoted in: Antonia Fraser, *Marie Antoinette* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001) 67.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Dickinson, "Departed to the Judgement." *Emily Dickinson: Poems Selected by Ted Hughes* (London: Farber and Farber, 2001) 21.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2007) 32-33.

<sup>9</sup> Marshall McLuhan, "The Emperor's Old Clothes" *The Man-Made Object*, Ed., Gyorgy Kepes, (New York: George Brazillier Inc., 1966), 90-95. Rpt. in *Marshall McLuhan Unbound*, vol. 20 Ed. Eric McLuhan and Terence Gordon, (Berkeley, CA: Ginko Press, 2005) 12.

<sup>10</sup> Cathy Horyn, "In Paris, a Nod to Old Masters." *New York Times* (January 29, 2009):E7.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Barzilay Freund, "Letter from the Editor," *ART + AUCTION* (January 2009):10.



**AVELINO SALA**



 LA ESPERA

## **A Learning of Loneliness**

*Does a shipwrecked person love the board to which so firmly he sticks?*

- Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator*

Some independent ideas about *La Espera*, an on going performance project, which was performed at the *Waterways Intervention* during Venice Biennale (2005) and officially featured at the Istanbul Biennale XIV.

Waterways was a collaborative project of 33 artists, curators and scholars which appeared on a working Vaporetto. *La Espera* took place off the plank of the Vaporetto in the public space of the Grand Canal.

We spend a great part of our life waiting. The artist spends all his life waiting. This activity of waiting is something that we all assume is inevitable or necessary. (A normal condition of man, a way of living, actually, as we all look toward the future instead of centering on the present.)

Fifteen years ago, I began surfing on the coast of northern Spain. As my surfing developed into a personal obsession, I began thinking about the process of waiting in the most public of spaces, the oceans surrounding the private space of nations. My current performance project, *La Espera* (The Wait) stems from my personal experience as a surfer. Surfing is not only a deep-rooted social sport but also a distinct culture with its own codes of visual speech, which are most often only accessible to the young. *La Espera* seeks to find a metaphorical action or performance of surfing that is understood by different generations in disparate locations from the Grand Canal in Venice to swimming pools in Miami.

*La Espera* suggests that waiting is linked to the worry that emerges when we do not know what or whom to expect. Yet, even when we know the dangers, we continue the senseless action of worry because we already know that we are before the remains of the unattainable thing and this turns into the metaphor that Blumenberg placed in the shipwreck of the philosophers: the table of values is inverted.

I decided not to contemplate the waves in the action of surfing. Instead, in *La Espera* I try to harmonize, as Jankelévitch would say, the adventure, the boredom and the serious thing with the same means used in advertising— a metaphor of seduction and persuasion.

The surfer continues waiting for a wave he knows will never arrive in places which are a physical impossibility but, it doesn't matter. The artist will be there, waiting in Venice's Gran Canal, in a fountain in Madrid, in a pool in Miami, because, maybe, just maybe, the extraordinary will happen, and the wave will

appear. *La Espera* is an infinite act of nihilism as well as hope, as it will continue in the most unexpected waters.

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Avelino Sala (1972) was born in Gijón, Asturias Spain. In addition to being an artist, Avelino is also the director of *Sublime* magazine and a curator with the group Commission. His next solo exhibition will be in May 2009 at Virgil de Voldère Gallery in New York.

**MEHMET ÖNGÜT**



Kent Karlsson, *Tempel of Hope and Doubt*,  
Steel, 19 x 6 x 4 meters,  
in situ Lindholmen pier in Gothenburg Harbour .  
Collection Norra Alvstranden, City of Gothenburg.  
Artwork © Kent Karlsson  
Artist & Photograph/Image ©Mats Ringqvist.  
Courtesy of Gallery Thomassen, 2009



## **Kent Karlsson**

As you enter the harbor in Gothenburg, Sweden, a massive image strikes you. In the midst of commercial traffic, seeing the sculpture *Tempel of Hope and Doubt* by Kent Karlsson is akin to seeing a mirage in the desert. An enormous monument approached from one angle, it may disappear the next time you turn your head to get your bearings in the city's harbor. As it changes color in the northern light, the work seems to question our sense of reality. While this transparent metal structure appears paper thin, it is an imposing presence at the heart of this coastal city.

Seemingly solid and fragile all at once, the sculpture is a brilliant inquiry into possibilities. It is also a reminder of where art in public space ought to take you. Like Italo Calvino's book, *The Invisible Cities* (1978), Karlsson's sculptures have elements of both the real and the imaginary. Let us not forget that cities are also made of dreams.

My discovery of Karlsson originated with a sculpture I saw at Galleri Thomassen during Art Basel, Miami 2008. Unlike Kubilai Khan, who in *Invisible Cities*, relied on Marco Polo's accounts to imagine the farthest corners of his empire, I was transported to the harbor in Gothenburg through the Internet, our new reality, and our new public space, which unfortunately is also a non-place. In *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo communicates with Kubilai Khan through sign language. Without Marco Polo or sign language to guide me, I google-translated an interview with Karlsson in the hopes of better understanding his work. While I now have a better understanding of the

structure of the Swedish language, I have little clue as to what the texts exactly mean in English. That's now part of my cyber-reality.

Through the non-place of the Internet, I also discovered Karlsson's work near the Arctic Circle, while in a fishing village in Brazil. For this I am especially grateful, as I may never make it that far North. Though set in an environment diametrically opposed to Gothenburg's crowded harbor, Karlsson's work in the Laplands is a counterpart in spirit to *Tempel of Hope and Doubt*. This northern sculpture is in the shape of a church, entirely made of mirrors, set on the Arctic highway, where sleepy drivers are startled and briefly absorbed into an imaginary world. Fortunately for them, it does not preclude their own fleeting reflection.

When Karlsson received a commission for a work in the Swedish Laplands, he spent some time investigating the area. This Arctic sculpture was to be constructed almost in a

void, on the Blue Highway, named after the extraordinary blue light the area receives. An artist could not wish for a more neutral public space or find himself at greater liberty. While it may have been tempting to create something detached and self-referential, Karlsson opted to construct a socially engaged work.

After investigating the area, Karlsson decided to base his work on an unorthodox group of religious revivalists called the Laestadians who inhabited the region. Based on Lutheranism, Laestadianism originated in the Laplands in the 19th century. In recent times, there was a highly momentous meeting in this area for the congregation. Expecting the arrival of what the Laestadians called the Silver Ark, a gigantic vessel meant to transport them to Jerusalem at the end of days, members of the group gathered naked on a frozen lake. The faithful waited. The Silver Ark never came. Thus, Karlsson's sculpture presents itself a gift to this community.

While the Silver Ark legend is an integral part of the work, the sculpture's strength lies in its relationship with the space it inhabits. The work's most dynamic quality is its reflection of the surrounding environment. As Karlsson commented, "People say it changes. It doesn't. It only reflects. If it's green, then it's green. If it's snow, then it's snow."<sup>1</sup>

Karlsson is interested in public space but not in publicity. From the rare interviews he gives, he seems a no-nonsense artist interested in the essence of things. One wonders what he thinks of the artificial, hyper-intellectual texts suffocating contemporary art. Karlsson is even dismissive of the significance of his own work, stating at one point, "It is in the wrong place. That's why this is considered Art, whatever the hell Art means!"<sup>2</sup> It may be because of his search for purity, Karlsson's sculptures have the most immediate, direct and intense relationship with public space.

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Mehmet Öngüt is a traveler and a travel writer who chases art in his continuous whirling. In both his imaginary and real world, he lives in Buenos Aires, Paris, Tokyo, Istanbul, Rio de Janeiro and New York. He studied history and languages at Yale University and pretended to do graduate work at Johns Hopkins University in Bologna, Italy, while secretly attending the University of Bologna. While Mehmet has not been to Gothenburg yet, he finds Kent Karlsson's work enticing enough for his next trip.

## **ENDNOTES**

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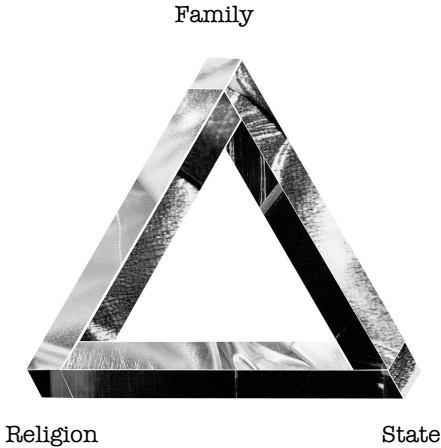
<sup>1</sup> Jan Bergson, Ideologia II. Nordisk bienal pa Roda sten. 2003. [www.zenit-kultur.nu](http://www.zenit-kultur.nu)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

# **ORIT BEN-SHITRIT**



# FRS



Family, Religion and State (FRS) are three social structures that fill an overlapping abstract space. A state can contain both families and multiple religions. While a religion incorporates families and states and a family can participate in or reject religion, this very choice can stand in harmony with or opposition to the state in which the family lives. More often than not, conflict arises

between the points of this polygon. Visually, this tension can be reflected in the image of the Penrose Triangle, also known as the Impossible Triangle or a tribar. Much like the impossibility for co-existence among FRS, the Penrose Triangle cannot exist in 3-dimensional space.

Religious beliefs and orthodoxy, which have systematically been reconditioned as a unifying force, are time and again at the root of our failing. Ideologies and policies often tragically hurt people of opposing religious beliefs.

Reductionism, rationality and Modernism's quest for progress are significant consequences of Enlightenment thought that have left people still searching for an object toward which to direct their beliefs. Paradoxically, even the decision to reject ideologies is an ideology in itself. Faced with these choices, how can one believe in anything?

In the image *Medieval Vasisthasana*, the Middle Age notion of humanity's innate depravity entwines with Enlightenment ideas of reason, forming a spatially convoluted composition. The puppet-like medieval figure, referencing Hans Holbein's *Danse Macabre*, reflects the religious edict, "Submit, or else meet your fate". In this way, fear is used to elicit faith while the rational mind attempts to decipher the structure of the space.

*Don't doubt the doubt* captures the moment when devoted faith slips out the back door and the edifice of reality crumbles. A self-referential loop<sup>1</sup> remains where, paradoxically, the only thing the lost individual can believe in is his/her doubt.

The fractured photo, *Intoxicating sovereignty (Jerusalem fall afternoon)* depicts Jerusalem in the time of the Second Temple (66 CE), when revolt against the occupying Romans led to the city's eventual destruction four years later. One of the oldest cities in the world,

Jerusalem has always been infused with fracture and duplicity, which carry on to this day in the city's fabric and leaders. As reverent home to three of the world's major religions, Jerusalem embodies Foucault's idea of a heterotopia – an impossible space where parallel contradictory layers exist.<sup>2</sup> The Janus figure in the top left corner of the image is the Roman god of beginnings and endings, a protector able to see both past and future. Ironically, the protectors of the city were to be its destroyers. The struggle for domination over Jerusalem continues as competing narratives strive to wipe out the remnants of past occupations.

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Orit Ben-Shitrit was born and raised in Jerusalem. Currently an MFA student at Hunter College, Orit works primarily in digital media including photography, animation and video. Her work has been exhibited in the United States, Italy, Germany, Greece, Slovenia, Spain and Russia.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas R. Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) 695.

<sup>2</sup> Ariella Azoulay, *Death's Showcase: The Power of Image in Contemporary Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003) 181.



Orit Ben-Shitrit,  
medieval Vasisthasana,  
2008 archival pigment print  
on Luster 40"x32"



Orit Ben-Shitrit,  
untitled (don't doubt the doubt),  
2008 archival pigment print  
on Luster 40"x27"



Orit Ben-Shitrit,  
intoxicating sovereignty (fall afternoon),  
2008 archival pigment print  
on Luster 40"x27"



**ELENA BAJO**





(1) Elena Bajo 'No **Power** for **Nobody**'  
Film-Sculpture, 16mm  
film projector enclosed  
inside a found old glass  
vitrine **placed** in a  
hallway. Installation

View, 16mm color film,  
**loop** 2min 32secs, film  
depicting a Berlin **bear**  
**walking** in circles and  
**backwards**,  
Kunstlerhaus  
Bethanien, Berlin, 2008



(2) Elena Bajo 'No  
**Power for Nobody**  
Film-Sculpture, 16mm  
film projector enclosed  
inside a found old glass  
vitrine **placed** in a  
hallway. Installation

Detail, 16mm color film,  
**loop** 2min 32secs, film  
depicting a Berlin **bear**  
**walking** in circles and  
**backwards**,  
Kunstlerhaus  
Bethanien, Berlin, 2008

## **Notes on Public Situations, Philosophical Models**

*Keine Macht für  
Niemand (No Power  
for Nobody), Berlin,  
2008 **BEAR With  
BEAR WITH ME***

*It was her walking  
what I heard, and I  
heard it like a silent  
Moan, It was her  
eyes beating, that  
made me stop, To  
look, to see more,  
her circular  
movement,  
transformed into a  
clock Day after day I  
came back Step  
after a step run  
eternal circles*

*without weariness  
or fainting Time  
became a cage*

### **DOWN BELOW**

“The ordinary  
practitioners of the  
**city** live ‘down  
below’, below  
thresholds at which  
visibility begins.  
They walk – an  
elementary form of  
this experience of  
the **city**: they are  
walkers,  
Wandersmanner,  
whose bodies follow  
the thicks and thins

of an urban 'text'  
they write without  
being able to read it.  
These practitioners  
make use of **spaces**  
that cannot be seen:  
their knowledge of  
them is as blind as  
that of lovers in  
each other's arms.  
The paths that  
correspond in this  
intertwining,  
unrecognized poems  
in which each body  
is an element signed  
by many others,  
elude legibility. It is  
as though the  
practices organizing  
a bustling **city** were  
characterized by  
their blindness. The  
networks of this

moving, intersecting  
writings compose a  
manifold story that  
has neither author  
nor spectator,  
shaped out of  
fragments of  
trajectories and  
alterations of  
**spaces** in relation to  
representations, it  
remains daily and  
indefinitely other"  
Michel de Certeau's  
The Practice of  
Everyday' Life

VITRUVIUS- THE  
PRODUCTION OF  
PLACE, **SPACE**  
MARX; THE  
**PRODUCTION** OF  
CAPITAL

In the stock market, a **bear market** is a period of declining prices. Pessimistic forecasting or negative activity is said to be **bearish** (due to the stereotypical posture of **bears** looking downwards)

NOMADODOLOGY,  
NOMADIC  
RESISTANCE AS  
production of space  
“Social space is a social product - the space produced in a certain manner serves as a tool of thought and action. It is not only a means of production

but also a means of control, and hence of domination/ power.” Henri Lefebvre “The Production of Space”

## **BEAR'S**

### **CONSPIRACY:**

#### **Backwards Walk**

Last Sunday two **bears** who live in the **Bear** Pit (Bärenzwinger) in the Koellnische Park started to walk in circles and backwards. After what it seemed an isolated event, similar situations

have been reported happening in other cities of the world. Sociologists, scientists and Architects are trying to decipher this mysterious behaviour are **bears** performing a secret ritual? without any purpose?

### **Bear Pit** **(Bärenzwinger)**

A **bear** pit was historically used to display **bears**, typically for entertainment and especially **bear-**baiting. The pit area

was normally surrounded by a high fence, above which the spectators would look down on the **bears**. The most traditional form of maintaining **bears** in **captivity** is keeping them in pits, although many zoos replaced these by more elaborate and **spacious** enclosures that attempt to replicate their natural habitats, for the benefit of the animals and the visitors.



**Félix Guattari,**  
**“Pour une**  
**refondation des**  
**pratiques sociales”,**  
**in Le Monde**  
**Diplomatique,**  
**October 1992.**

“The individual  
and the group  
cannot avoid a  
certain existential  
plunge into chaos.  
This is already what  
we do every night  
when we abandon  
ourselves to the  
**world of dreams.**

The main question is  
what we gain from  
this plunge: a sense  
of disaster, or the  
revelation of new

outlines of the  
possible?”

**Bruno the bear**  
**shot dead in Alps**

It’s been since **1835**  
that anyone in  
Germany saw a wild  
living bear. That is,  
until **Bruno the**  
**bear**, who was  
unfortunately  
brutally murdered  
last year, probably  
for political reasons.

**Interview with**  
**Paolo Virno By**  
**Héctor Pavón 12-**  
**24-04-**  
**[http://libcom.org/](http://libcom.org/library/creating-a-new-public-sphere-)**  
**library/creating-a-**  
**new-public-sphere-**

## **without-the-state- paolo-virno**

Héctor Pavón: We live in a **new** epoch that, as such, needs **new** values, **new** concepts. But, who thinks them, who constructs them?

## **MAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP**

When an animal is moved from its own environment into captivity, it must reconstruct a whole new world and this is an enormous task. The primary effect is the restriction of movement and the secondary effects

include lack of diversion and occupation, no food choice, impossibility of avoiding its own species at will, possible unsuitable differentiation of **space**, anti-social behaviour. (...) so the solution is to reduce the flight distance and so neutralise the animal's desire to escape. This is possible by taming. Zoos now often receive animals bred in **captivity**, whose flight distances are greatly reduced from their wild ancestors.

**Notes on some  
topics in Applied  
Animal Behaviour  
[\*\*lbehaviour.net/Ju  
dithKBlackshaw/J  
KBlackshawCh1Op  
df\*\*](http://www.anima</a></b></p></div><div data-bbox=)**

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Elena Bajo is a Spanish visual artist currently living and working between New York, Berlin, LA and Madrid. Her conceptually-generated practice is concerned with the social and political dimensions of everyday actions and common places. She works across installation, performance, participatory events, video and writing. Bajo holds a Masters from Central Saint Martins, London, and a Masters in Architecture from ESARQ, Barcelona. In 2006, she attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine. She has recently exhibited in Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin and Fondazione Ratti, Milan. Future solo exhibit include P.S.1/MoMA, New York.

# **ANNOTATIONS**



$\sqrt{art}$